

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link including:

connecting traffic from a service module to a first physical module having a link layer framer that is connected via a link interface of the first physical module to the protected egress link, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic; and

connecting the traffic input to the link interface of ~~through~~ the first physical module through a pooling switch to a second physical module that is connected via a link interface of the second physical module to an alternate egress link, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through a ~~link layer framer of the second physical module~~ but is processed through the link layer framer of the first physical module.
2. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the link interface of the first physical module ~~contains~~ comprises an optical link interface module.
3. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the link interface of the second physical module ~~contains~~ comprises an optical link interface module.
4. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the link interface of the first physical module ~~contains~~ comprises an electrical link interface module.
5. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the link interface of the second physical module ~~contains~~ comprises an electrical link interface module.

6. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the first physical module ~~contains~~ comprises a module that places the traffic in proper form for a pooling switch.
7. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the second physical module ~~contains~~ comprises a module that places the traffic in proper form for a pooling switch.
8. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the traffic through the protected egress link and the alternate egress link have a synchronization difference smaller than 50ms.
9. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the traffic through the protected egress link and the alternate egress link behave in a manner to the user as if there is no synchronization difference between the two traffic flows.
10. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the pooling switch enables multiple logical streams to be included in one physical interface.
11. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the pooling switch is a packet switch.
12. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein pooling switch is a time division multiplexing switch.
13. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link including:
 - connecting traffic to a service module from a first physical module having a link layer framer that is connected via a link interface of the first physical module to the protected ingress link, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic; and
 - connecting the traffic through a second physical module that is connected via a link interface of the second physical module to an alternate ingress link through a pooling switch to the link interface of the first physical module, wherein the traffic in the second physical module

is not processed through a[[ny]] link layer framer of the second physical module but is processed through the link layer framer of the first physical module in the event that the traffic through the second physical module from the alternate ingress link is selected to be used.

14. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 1, wherein the service module decides from information within an input traffic stream to the service module where to output the input traffic stream.

15. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the link interface of the first physical module ~~contains~~ comprises an optical link interface module.

16. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the link interface of the second physical module ~~contains~~ comprises an optical link interface module.

17. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the link interface of the first physical module ~~contains~~ comprises an electrical link interface module.

18. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the link interface of the second physical module ~~contains~~ comprises an electrical link interface module.

19. ((previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the first physical module contains a module that places the traffic in proper form for a pooling switch.

20. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the second physical module contains a module that places the traffic in proper form for a pooling switch.

21. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the traffic through the protected ingress link and the alternate ingress link have a synchronization difference smaller than 50ms.
22. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the traffic through the protected ingress link and the alternate ingress link behave in a manner to the user as if there is no synchronization difference between the two traffic flows.
23. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the pooling switch enables multiple logical streams to be included in one physical interface.
24. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein the pooling switch is a packet switch.
25. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 13, wherein pooling switch is a time division multiplexing switch.
26. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link including:
connecting traffic from a service module to a first pooling switch;
connecting the first pooling switch to a first physical module having a link layer framer that is connected via a link interface of the first physical module to the protected egress link, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic; and
connecting the traffic input to the link interface of ~~through~~ the first physical module through a second pooling switch to a second physical module that is connected via a link interface of the second physical module to an alternate egress link, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through a [[ny]] link layer framer of the second physical module but is processed through the link layer framer of the first physical module.
27. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link including:
connecting traffic to a service module from a first pooling switch;

connecting the first pooling switch to a first physical module having a link layer framer that is connected via a link interface of the first physical module to the protected ingress link, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic; and

connecting the traffic through a second physical module that is connected via a link interface of the second physical module to an alternate ingress link through a second pooling switch to the link interface of the first physical module, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through a link layer framer of the second physical module but is processed through the link layer framer of the first physical module in the event that the traffic through the second physical module from the alternate ingress link is selected to be used.

28. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected egress link including:

connecting traffic from a service module to a first pooling switch;

connecting the first pooling switch to a first physical module having a link layer framer, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic;

connecting the traffic through the first physical module through a second pooling switch to a second physical module that is connected via a link interface of the second physical module to a protected egress link, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through a link layer framer of the second physical module but is processed by the link layer framer of the first physical module; and

connecting the traffic through the first physical module through the second pooling switch to a third physical module that is connected via a link interface of the third physical module to an alternate egress link, wherein the traffic in the third physical module is not processed through a link layer framer of the third physical module but is processed by the link layer framer of the first physical module.

29. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 28, wherein the first physical module does not include a link interface module.

30. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected egress link as in claim 28, wherein 1:N protection is provided.

31. (currently amended) A method of protecting a protected ingress link including:

connecting traffic to a service module from a first pooling switch;

connecting the first pooling switch to a first physical module having a link layer framer, wherein the link layer framer includes a queue for storing the traffic;

connecting the traffic through a second physical module that is connected via a link interface of the second physical module to a [[to the]] protected ingress link through a second pooling switch to the first physical module, wherein the traffic in the second physical module is not processed through a[[ny]] link layer framer of the second physical module but is processed by the link layer framer of the first physical module; and

connecting the traffic through a third physical module that is connected via a link interface of the third physical module to an alternate ingress link through the second pooling switch to the first physical module, wherein the traffic in the third physical module is not processed through a[[ny]] link layer framer of the third physical module but is processed by the link layer framer of the first physical module.

32. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 31, wherein the first physical module does not include a link interface module.

33. (previously presented) A method of protecting a protected ingress link as in claim 31, wherein 1:N protection is provided.

34. (currently amended) A device for switching traffic comprising:

A first pooling switch configured to be connected to a plurality of physical modules, wherein each of the plurality of physical modules is configured to not process traffic through a link layer framer, and wherein the plurality of the physical modules each include a link interface;

A link layer framer connected to the first pooling switch, wherein the link layer framer receives traffic from or sends traffic to a selected physical module of the plurality of physical modules, and wherein the plurality of physical modules other than the selected physical module provide 1:N protection;

A second pooling switch connected to the link layer framer; and

A service module connected to the second pooling switch.